THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

April/May 2012 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Catholic Myopia

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

When President Obama proposed legislation that would require Catholic institutions to include contraception in their employee health plans, the hierarchy went ballistic. In our diocese, the bishop wrote a very forceful letter, which every pastor was required to read at Mass, urging all Catholics to contact the White House and express opposition to the proposal. Under a banner of religious liberty and freedom of conscience, Catholics raised such an outcry that the President backed down and moderated his proposal.

Pope Paul VI's encyclical letter, *Humanae Vitae*, explicitly forbade artificial contraception. That ban is still part of Catholic teaching, and bishops must promote it, especially when some of what falls under the label "contraception" involves abortion, but the vigor of the hierarchy's campaign against the Obama proposal raises serious questions of moral priorities.

The last time an episcopal letter was read in all the parishes involved the issue of gay marriage, and the time before that involved abortion. Again, the Church has clear teachings on these issues which bishops are obligated to articulate, but the degree of opposition given to them dwarfs other concerns.

A friend of mine once mused, "I think you have to pay fines for your sins to get into heaven: a half million dollars for killing, ten thousand for stealing, a hundred for lying, and a quarter for masturbation." The hierarchy seems to be standing this paradigm on its head.

Jesus never talks about sexuality in the Gospels, save a description of marriage as a man and a woman becoming "one flesh." However, Christ does repeatedly tell His followers to eschew violence, wealth, and greed, while embracing service of the poor, prayer, and work for justice. The evangelical centrality of nonviolence is underscored by Jesus' rejection of violence and insistence on forgiveness from the Cross itself.

And yet, when our nation went to war in Iraq, a war Pope John Paul II called "immoral, unjust, and illegal," no church statements were read in all the parishes. Quite the contrary, American churches were festooned with yellow ribbons and the names of soldiers were included in weekly prayers at Mass. Many parishes displayed soldiers' names on the altar in a kind of sanctification of their actions. Holy Cross College's Saint Joseph's Chapel honors fallen World War I veterans under Saint Ignatius' motto "To the greater glory of God." Anyone who knows the history of that war has to wonder how any of it could have given glory to God.

So weak and muddled is the episcopal voice on war that the term pro-life has come to have little credibility outside Church circles. Similarly, despite excellent papal and episcopal letters on the rights of workers and economic justice, the bishops have not gone to the mat during

(Continued on Page 2)

Entry Denied

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

On a Saturday morning in late January, I received a phone call from Kathy Kelly, coordinator for Voices for Creative Nonviolence, inviting me to join a human rights delegation to Bahrain. The need was immediate, she said. Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, was requesting international observers to arrive prior to February 14 – the one-year anniversary of the country's anti-government protest.

Until three weeks ago, I knew nothing about the tiny island kingdom or the government crackdown on its Arab Spring revolution. The title of one of the latest human rights reports on the country sounded ominous: "Bahrain: A Gathering Storm."

For over a week, I deliberated the invitation. At 52, my wanderlust persists, but I am not brave by nature and I make decisions slowly. I understood Mr. Najab's request in principle. Bringing international observers to conflict zones is a basic technique of nonviolent intervention. I had been a part of such initiatives in the past. The trip's costs in time and money were surmountable and my husband wholeheartedly supported the mission. But its hastiness and many unknowns worried me, and I remained conflicted and afraid. What good could a handful of Americans do in Bahrain?

"You need to live more from your heart – your deepest self – than your head," Sister Irma, my spiritual advisor, had been telling me. In this instance, I did not know what my "deepest self" was saying. Then, during my morning quiet time, I read a passage in a book on prayer that described loving one's neighbor as the way to know the love of God.

"[A]nybody in the world may one day actually become my neighbor and ask

(Continued on Page 4)

Myopia

(Continued from Page 1)

recent campaigns in Wisconsin and Ohio to degrade union rights. A recent Republican proposal to strip the right to minimum wage and overtime pay for thousands of workers in the floral industry did not elicit any episcopal outcry. Catholic teaching on immigration is similarly progressive, but just as likely to be kept on the back burner as the broad-ranging Catholic critique of capitalism.

Of course, there are some exceptions, but the full-court press Obama is facing on contraception is very rarely employed for peace and economic justice. In the context of the widening economic gap between rich and poor and almost obscene dependence of nations on war preparations and war-making, Catholic leaders who fail to trumpet the broadest range of Church teaching with equal vigor risk a loss of credibility amounting to social irrelevance.

The myopic focus of the hierarchy on sexual issues is especially worrisome now because it is an election year. Consider Senator Santorum. He supported the Iraq War from its outset, likening it to "The Lord of the Rings." He did not support the US withdrawal from Iraq and would continue the war in Afghanistan. During the Iowa presidential caucuses, he said that if he were president he would bomb Iran. On the campaign trail in Michigan, a state with 9.3% unemployment and a 15% poverty rate, Senator Santorum said he supports the huge American wealth gap, "because people rise to different levels of success based on what they contribute to society and to the marketplace and that's as it should be." He opposes benefits for undocumented people, comprehensive immigration reform, and supports building a border fence and making English the national language. On February 7, he said, "I've never believed in the hoax of global warming." He is also a partial supporter of the death penalty. But none of these anti-Catholic positions will matter should he win the nomination because, for conservative Catholics and the hierarchy, abortion, gay marriage, and contraception are the issues which trump all others. The Church is as likely to virtually endorse him or someone with similarly appalling credentials, as they did Ronald Reagan, with equally bad consequences. Under Reagan, the rich got dramatically richer, civilians were killed in Grenada, Libya, Panama, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, while abortion, the issue for which Catholics sacrificed most of their values, remained the law of the land. The only difference during the Bush years was that Catholics were duped at an exponentially higher cost in civilian casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But such a pessimistic assessment of Catholic social impact has a flaw. It depends on a top-down vision of the Church. The Catholic Catechism, following the lead of the Second Vatican Council, defines The Church as "the People of God, established by Christ 'as a communion of life, of charity, and of truth... sent forth into the whole world as the light of the world and the salt of the earth.'" (LG, 9). *Metanoia*, the turning to God in our lives, should be accelerated by wise pastors, but is primarily dependent on the Holy Spirit, which enters individual hearts and invites us to holiness. In our struggle to enflesh that sanctity in our day-to-day actions, we can find guidance in the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, the lives of the saints, the pastoral letters of popes and bishops, and in the Catholic Catechism.

When nurses went on strike at Worcester's Saint Vincent Hospital, a sympathetic priest told us that the bishop had asked clergy not to walk the picket lines, but this did not prevent individual Catholics from marching under banners quoting scripture and the pope on the explicit rights of nurses not to be forced to harm their patients and family lives with mandatory overtime. Similarly, Catholic teaching moves many to host undocumented people, to support the Occupy Wall Street Movement, to call for a living wage, to defend the environment, and to protest against war. As the Catholic Worker's co-founder, Peter Maurin, liked to say, "We need to blow the dynamite of the Catholic Church." We should pray for leaders like Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero, but we cannot wait for their appearance before becoming salt of the earth. In these times, it is up to the people in the pews to put sexual ethics in the context of a broad passion for making a world where there is more love and less suffering, a world where it is so much easier to be good. Ω

Vol. 28, No. 5 THE April/May2012

CATHOLIC RADICAL

Published by:

The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker Community
52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610 Telephone: (508) 753-3588, 753-3089
Email:theresecw2@gmail.com

Founded in 1933, The Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Catholic Worker Comics

April Fools' Day, 2012

Kelvin and Hobbs by Bill Wattahson

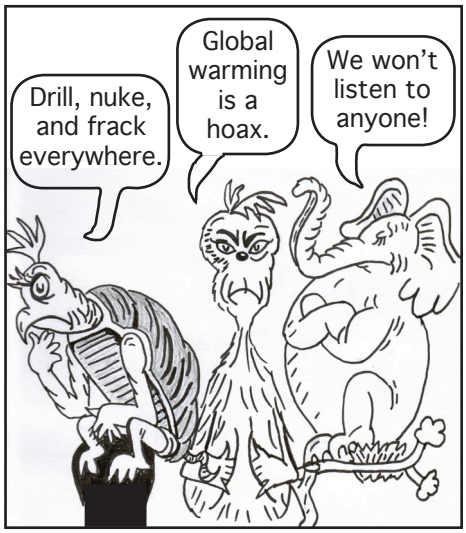
46.2 million Americans are now poor, the most in over 53 years.
In 2011, nine CEO's were paid 32 million dollars in bonuses.
Maybe somebody should occupy their consciences.

Rintintin in The Gaza Flotilla by Serge

Help!
END THE SIEGE
Thank you for saving us.
No time for that now. The army is attacking the clinic!
END THE SIEGE
ZOOM
BANG
Hospital
Gotta save the clinic!
Relax Captain. There's a Gandhian peace force coming to the rescue.

Doctor Seusss

by Theodor Geiser



Hand-drawn art by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Entry Denied

(Continued from Page 1)

from me in the name of God my personal love and service," the author wrote.

Days earlier, I had watched a Youtube interview with Dr. Fareeda AlDallal, wife of orthopedic surgeon Dr. Al Ekri, one of a number of Bahraini doctors given a fifteen-year prison sentence after he criticized the government's excessive use of force during last year's protest. Like her husband, Dr. AlDallal, had also been beaten and detained and was now speaking out about her treatment in police custody and demanding a fair trial for the imprisoned doctors. Of course she was afraid, she told the interviewer. But if she didn't speak out, who would? "The international community is not with us," she said. "We have only God."

Late one Sunday night, I decided the signs were clear enough. I would go. Nabeel and Dr. AlDallal were my "neighbors" in the world asking for help.

Preparations for the trip were easy and cheap. The cost of my ticket was covered and an email appeal to friends produced enough funds for my in-country expenses. I had been advised to dress up. The well-coifed traveler in coordinated attire might stand a better chance of getting through Bahrain International Airport than a shabby-looking peace activist. So I had my hair trimmed, purchased sunglasses and dress boots at a local thrift store, and donned creased trousers on the day of departure.

At Amsterdam's Schipol Airport, a transfer point on my journey, I attended Mass where a devout Polish woman named Maria gave me a rosary for my expedition and promised her prayers. As the plane flew over the Syrian city of Aleppo, I continued to read from a country profile of Bahrain in preparation for the many interviews to come.

But I never got out of Bahrain International Airport. My request for a tourist visa was denied. A dour-faced immigration and customs officer noticed that I had not listed a local phone number on my disembarkation card and became suspicious. He whisked off with my passport into a small office where another duty officer – there were many milling about that night – googled my name and discovered that I am a contributor to *The National Catholic Reporter*. Damning evidence, apparently.

The tired-looking officer who grilled me was gentle but persistent. Why had I come to Bahrain? Who had invited me? What did I plan to do while I was here? I was told that since I was a writer I would have to apply for a visa from the Ministry of Information. I knew this meant certain refusal. For the past several months, Bahrain's Ministry of Information has been denying visas to human rights organizations and major news outlets including *The New*

York Times, *Wall Street Journal*, *Christian Science Monitor,* and *Al Jazeera*. Mr. Rajab's request for help from Kathy was an attempt to penetrate this government-imposed ban on foreign observers.

If I could provide the name of a local NGO (non-governmental organization) that invited me, my questioner said, perhaps I could stay. In my backpack were the phone numbers of several Bahraini activists, but I would not divulge these. My visa denied, I had a twenty-hour wait for the next KLM flight back to Boston.

I did not take my rejection personally. On the night I arrived, there were others, including an AP reporter and another member from our team of human rights monitors who never got past the customs and immigration booth. The following morning, while sitting outside the immigration office, I saw passports of varying hues getting whisked away. Among those scrutinized was that of a young British consultant for an oil company who frequently comes to Bahrain."It's never been like this," he fumed.

Through the large windows of the airport's departure lounge, I could see the skyline of the capital Manama off in the distance looking especially alluring in the morning sun. I thought of all the migrants who make it to the US border, only to be booted out.

"You should not have been asked to leave," said the Bahraini ticket agent as he booked my flight back to Amsterdam.

"Well, apparently your country doesn't want writers visiting right now," I said.

Since it was the eve of the February 14th protest, I asked him what he thought would happen tomorrow. "Nothing, I hope." Then looking over his shoulder to see if his colleagues were watching, he murmured, "I can't really talk about the situation here." This furtive exchange was my only interview in Bahrain.

I arrived home on Valentine's Day, the very day I expected to be monitoring a mass demonstration in Manama. My Bahrain odyssey had taken a grand total of seventy-two hours.

Although it was maddening to be denied entry, I do not regret making the trip. My husband Scott said that in war, if ten people rush the ramparts and only six succeed, the campaign is not dismissed as a failure. Out of the fourteen Americans who tried to enter Bahrain as human rights observers, three were denied entry and eight were arrested and deported, but only after they had spent several days in the country witnessing and reporting on the government crackdown of the predominantly Shia rebellion. You can read their reports on the newly created www.witnessbahrain.org.

While in Bahrain, the Americans connected with some extraordinarily brave pro-democracy activists including the widely-admired Nabeel Rajab. These connections have enriched all involved and provide yet another example – I have seen so many – of how human beings breach the walls separating them from neighbors. To observe, even from afar, how a small, handful of ordinary Americans were able to cast a bit of light on the situation in Bahrain was inspiring, and I am grateful for the privilege.

Moreover, my aborted trip unexpectedly took me to parts unknown. The journey provided an occasion to live by faith rather than analysis. Preparing for it required abandoning my usual preoccupation with outcome and following the clues of the moment. And that is new territory for me. Ω

Rebuilding for Peace

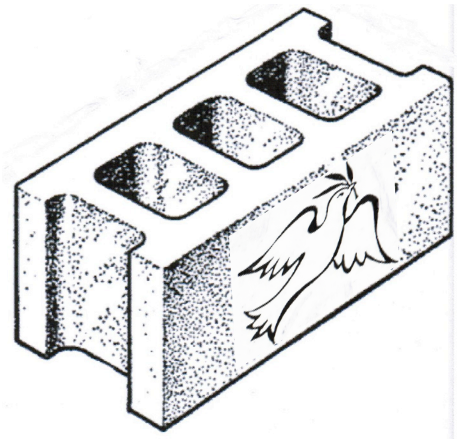
by David Maher

Editor's Note: While international attention was focused on Syria and Iran, Israel escalated its policy of Palestinian home demolition and settlement construction. On February 13, the Israeli government demolished a Palestinian community center and playground in East Jerusalem. On February 21, the government approved construction of 600 Jewish-only homes deep in the occupied West Bank. The author of this article, a teacher and US Marine veteran with a passion for justice and the environment, volunteered in July of 2011 with the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions.

On the first morning of the 2011, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) summer rebuilding camp, I awoke to Salim Shawamreh's chant of CO-FF-EE, COFFEE, FREE! This was followed by his hearty laughter. Friendly, bespectacled, heavyset, and mustachioed with an unruly crop of hair, Salim chain smokes Marlboro Lights. He and his wife Arabiya own Beit Arabiya (Arabiya's House), located in the West Bank town of Anata. As of 2011, Beit Arabiya had been demolished four times by the Israeli government. With the support of ICAHD, Beit Arabiya has been rebuilt each time. The house has become a symbol of Israel's cruel and illegal practice of demolishing Palestinian homes and other structures, as well as a symbol of Palestinian resistance. Beit Arabiya is no longer the year-round home of the Shawamreh family. Salim believes that to live there would antagonize the Israeli government and invite a fifth demolition. Instead, Arabiya and Salim have dedicated Beit Arabiya as a center of peace in the memories of Rachel Corrie and Nuha Sweidan, two women who were killed resisting home demolitions.

For two weeks, Salim and Arabiya hosted 26 internationals, including myself, at Beit Arabiya while we rebuilt the home of a Palestinian man, Abu Omar, and his family living on the opposite side of Anata. The original home was built in 1990, on privately owned land, but without a building permit. A permit was denied on the grounds that his land was zoned as an "agricultural area." This is an excuse for denying permits and reflects Israel's long-time policy of curtailing construction by Palestinians.

Each morning of the summer rebuilding camp, Arabiya prepares Arabic coffee and Salim serves it to the early risers. He pours it from a long-handled pot into short clear glasses. The coffee is hot, murky, chocolate brown colored and delicious. I drink mine unsweetened. At the summer rebuilding camp, the men sleep outdoors on foam pads and under tarps. The women volunteers sleep inside the



house. It is wonderful sleeping outdoors. The mornings are especially delightful. It is quiet. The sun rises. The air is already warm. The coffee drinkers talk of progress at the job site.

Salim hired a handful of Palestinian tradesmen for the rebuilding. The internationals provided the grunt labor. We moved concrete blocks, unloaded 80-lb. bags of cement from trucks, mixed the cement with water, and passed it and buckets of sand and stone to workers on scaffolding, who mixed them and poured the concrete into forms. We also pulled nails from boards that were used to construct forms, moved rebar, and more.

By midmorning, the sun and heat became oppressive. Salim arrived on the job site with popsicles. Abu Omar's wife offered hot, sweet tea served in plastic cups.

Six times each day, Palestinian drivers shuttled vans, cramped with volunteers, the two miles between Beit Arabiya and the job site. By the second day, I decided to walk, and began, each morning at breakfast, recruiting others to join me. Often, we stopped in shops to purchase water or fruit. We found a pastry shop. The Palestinians welcomed us. Word had spread that internationals were rebuilding a home.

Apparently not everyone got the word. One morning, while walking to the job site, two young Palestinian boys approached from the opposite direction. They were out on an errand carrying bread and water. I stepped to the side to yield, but one deliberately walked into me thrusting a shoulder forward.

When I related this to others at the job site, the speculation was that the boy quite likely thought I was an Israeli. Typically, the only white men the children see are Israeli soldiers.

Unfortunately, on the evening of January 23, 2012, continuing into the next morning, Israeli soldiers destroyed Beit Arabiya for the fifth time, demolished Abu Omar's home exactly six months after we reconstructed it, and destroyed other Bedouin structures. Within hours, seven homes were demolished, leaving 52 people, including 29 children, displaced.

ICAHD estimates that since the beginning of the Israeli Occupation, in 1967, at least 18,000 Palestinian homes have been destroyed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. When a Bedouin home is destroyed, the water cistern or well is typically destroyed also.

Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention says, "Any destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons... is prohibited." The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights says in Article 17, "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property," and in Article 25, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including... housing...."

ICAHD plans to rebuild Beit Arabiya this July. Go to ICAHD-USA for more information. Ω

Peaceful Struggle in Panama

Redenor

Editor's Note: Brenna Cussen Anglada, of the New Hope Catholic Worker Farm in Iowa, spent 12 days in Panama with the Michigan Peace Team observing a dispute between the Ngobe-Bugle indigenous communities and the Panamanian government. Below is an excerpt from her March 2nd blog entry. Go to: mptinpanama.blogspot.com for more details.

Last night, March 1st, members of the Michigan Peace Team met with two members of the Ngobe negotiations delegation. They were informed that just a few hours earlier, police had fired buckshot into a peaceful gathering of members of the indigenous Ngobe tribe, who had been occupying a Panama City park for the last twenty-two days. Six people, including two journalists, were wounded.

"The police say that we were drunk, using drugs, machetes, guns, etc. We have none of those things. We don't even have any food to eat! We have only our voices," said a hoarse Idi Morerra Bangamá, a young leader in his tribe's demonstrations.

The Ngobe are protesting against hydroelectric dam projects, which they claim are not only flooding homes and farms, for which proper compensation is not being paid, but also are depriving communities of their historic water supplies. Though the struggle has been going on for nearly 12 years, a recent decision by the Panamanian government to overturn a law that would provide environmental protection to Ngobe lands has sparked more unrest.

Demonstrations by the Ngobe have been met by the police with tear gas, rubber coated bullets, and other weapons. Negotiations between the Ngobe and the Panamanian government have been underway since Monday, but talks began to deteriorate last night, and the Ngobe are currently discerning whether or not to continue with the process. Presently, hundreds of Ngobe are standing vigil at 12 different locations around their reservation, completely blocking several roads and bridges. Thousands more are ready to come down from the mountains should the negotiations fail. If this should happen, Panama could erupt in chaos. Says Idi, "We don't want the government's money, we want our land. Even with the lack of food, water, and sleep, we have our spirits." Ω

Focus on Afghanistan

by Ken Hannaford-Ricardi

Afghanistan is not even on the radar screen of the majority of Americans any longer, Ken. Relatively few US soldiers are dying [in combat], and that's the extent of the average American's thinking— How many are dying?" This was the somber analysis of Congressman James McGovern, one of the most high-profile congressional proponents of ending American involvement in Afghanistan as quickly and safely as possible. Meeting with Representative McGovern shortly after returning from a month-long stay in Afghanistan early this winter, I had the opportunity to describe what I had seen on the streets of Kabul: children, underfed and lacking warm winter clothing, begging for change amidst the capital's often chaotic traffic; neighborhoods without the most basic human services – sewerage disposal, trash removal, a dependable supply of electricity. Children joined goats and sheep pawing through piles of garbage on the streets in a feeble attempt at discovering something of value to eat. Open ditches lining the sides of many roads caught the waste that flowed unchecked from the kitchen and bathroom pipes of adjoining homes.

Our apartment, a five-room flat housing nine of us, had five pieces of furniture, none of them a bed. We slept on blankets laid on the floor in rooms without central heating, a stove, or a refrigerator. We cooked on a small propane tank fitted with a detachable ring that turned the cylinder into a primitive stove. There was no hot water except for what we could boil in a tea kettle. During the entire month, pouring water from a small pail over our heads provided our only "shower." In an apartment where frost frequently formed on the insides of windows and where we could often see our own breath, it goes without saying that most of us showered as quickly and as infrequently as possible.

We were by no means the poorest of the poor.

Those few of us who have ventured into Afghanistan have discovered a people in desperate need of real and tangible help. Much-publicized accounts of children freezing to death in refugee camps form merely the tip of a largely unseen iceberg of grinding, unending poverty that stunts bodies, minds, and a people's ability to hope.

With this in mind, the Saints Francis and Thérèse Catholic Worker community is initiating an attempt to put Afghanistan back into America's collective consciousness. Scott and I have both visited Afghanistan. Either of us will speak before any church, civic, or classroom group on life in today's Afghanistan. We know without any doubt that Afghan citizens are "the least, the last, and the [most] left out" in any of NATO's strategic considerations.

In a long-standing Catholic Worker tradition, there is no cost for our presentations. Write us at ken@vcnv.org to work out a date convenient for your group. All you need is a heart of compassion and a desire to know more about the country that has borne the brunt of our military presence for more than ten years. You might be surprised at what you'll learn. Ω

Letters

Saludos, Claire and Scott,
...The paper continues to be stimulating and inspiring, amusing and necessarily sad, with so much reality news, like the page dedicated to the monks of Tibhirine and another page re: Guantánamo in the February/March issue. Your brief tribute to Father McCarthy gave me a long moment of satisfaction, in a footnote that recognized a marvelous man.

Honduras is still a country where most people seem to be surviving in misery. There are so many reasons to be miserable even when we admit multiple motives for joy and gratitude and love. But miserable news from Comayagua today that 358 men burned to death in a prison because they could not get out of the building, buried all our joy with pain and sorrow. The headlines: "Horror!," "In flames!," "*¡Que Dolor!*", and "*Penal*." Our reaction to such tragedies: "Mercy!"

Father John Wallace
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Dear Scott,
Beautiful February/March issue. A fine tribute to Rita Corbin. This was the first year of the past five that I did not get her annual C.W. calendar.

I've recently read Jim Forest's bio of D. Day and then got a decent used copy of William Miller's bio of Miss Day. I think he wrote the first, and they just keep coming. To read her life story is to read a history of the 20th century. Not being Catholic myself, I certainly hope Benny XVI declares her a saint.

Your article on power was interesting. At 63, I've given up on the system. They are all corrupt on some level, and I don't think I'll vote next November. I don't trust any Republicans with my pension and medicines. Ron Paul is a little out there, but one idea strikes me. A part-time Congress showing up for 2/3 months in the spring and then go home.... Anyway, the best to you and all in your community,

Richard Douglass
Northampton, Massachusetts

Hi Claire,
...Katja and I found the enclosed poem by Albany poet Dan Wilcox so moving, so provocative, we wanted to share it with you and Scott. Would that all Americans could read it and THINK.

Paul Rehm
Greenville, New York

What Really Happened...

David Fleischer

was that it was nurses, doctors, civil engineers, & soldiers in clown suits who invaded Afghanistan in October, 2001.

the children laughed, thought that Americans were really funny & liked them.

Their parents found work building roads & schools & water treatment plants.

They even got TVs & small refrigerators & the electricity stayed on all day & all night too.

What really happened was that when the dusty men from caves with Kalashnikovs told them Americans were evil & wanted to kill them everyone laughed & no one wanted to be a suicide bomber. Ω

Catholic Worker Calendar

Brian Kavanagh

April 23 & May 7 & 21 — Mass: Please join us in Eucharistic prayer and song. 7:30 P.M.. Refreshments to follow.

April 6 —Stations of the Cross: Join us in a walk to reflect on contemporary examples of Christ's suffering. Gather at 11:30 A.M., leave at noon, beginning and ending at 52 Mason Street. Soup and bread to follow.

April 16— The Boston Marathon: Watch Scott try to run 26.2 miles under 3:35.

April 25 — Discussion: Worcester's Opposition to the Iraq War: If you were involved in opposition to the Iraq War, please attend this discussion of anti-war activities in Worcester 2003-2009. Some of the discussion may be taped for local TV. For more details e-mail Mike Benedetti at pieandcoffee@gmail.com.

May 6 – Foley 5K Road Race: Join this fund-raiser for public school students. Scott Schaeffer-Duffy is Race Director. Go to: www.Foley5KRoadRace.com.

Mason Street Musings

The goodness of God shines in so many corners of the world. Last week, I read of a retired Catholic priest in South Korea who has joined villagers on the island of Jeju in their campaign to oppose construction of a naval base that will harbor nuclear-capable warships and cause environmental damage. Last summer, Father Bartholomew Mun Jung-hyun moved to Jeju "to share in the suffering of the villagers opposing the base."

Demonstrations in South Korea are not staid affairs. During one Jeju protest, Father Mun, who is 71, scrambled atop a police vehicle in an attempt to prevent the arrest of several demonstrators. An online photo of the spry priest shows him standing on the roof of the car, legs astride, long white beard flowing, looking like Gandolf in Tolkien's **Lord of the Rings**.

In February, Father Mun offered Mass along an area of the coastline where base construction is underway. Maine activist Bruce Gagnon filmed a portion of the service and posted it on Youtube. Watching the priest raise his arms for a fiercely delivered benediction, I thought of the many Masses I have attended that were prayed in locales of violence and despair — ghettoes, war zones, at the deadly crossing point along the US/Mexico border.

"Do you really think people care about justice these days?" a priest recently asked me one evening. Although tired, I immediately responded with a vigorous, "Yes!" Perhaps as pastor of an affluent parish, he could not see it. But at the Catholic Worker, we are privy to a gloriously wide network of peace and justice campaigns in the US and abroad. Our kitchen table is cluttered with reports of ordinary people speaking up for the imprisoned, the

Chris Anderson

undocumented, the aborted, the bombed, and the exploited. Knowing of these campaigns, and participating in some of them, is one of the great riches of being a Catholic Worker.

Is my optimism naïve? I don't think so. Faith is not for the faint-hearted or dull-eyed. We have to pray for the ability to see the vitality of conscience and the power of persistent love that is being expressed all around us. These are just as real as our cruelty and stupidity.

Here on Mason Street, life unfolds in marvelous and ordinary ways. Justin, our oldest son, got engaged to a wonderful woman named Patricia Kirkpatrick, the proposal made in a February snowstorm on a hilltop at St. Joseph's Abbey. Dexter, the cat, moved in upstairs, ending a decade-long micefest.

In a few days, I will travel to Washington, DC to attend the 25th anniversary conference of the Consistent Life Ethic, a movement committed to addressing all forms of socially-sanctioned killing. While I am gone, Dave, Ken, and Scott will gather for the Monday morning house meeting to discuss the work of the week, the needs of our guests, and finances, a constant topic around here. There are large bills looming and not enough funds to cover them. Two electricians recently informed us that the ancient wiring in the house is hazardously brittle and needs attention *now*. The project will cost at least twenty thousand dollars, so any contribution you can make, dear reader, will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for the gifts already given.

"Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim," sang the congregation at the conclusion of last Sunday's Mass. The song, along with the image of the agile and daring Father Mun, have been in my head ever since. Happy Easter everyone. Ω

Claire

SS. Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker
52 Mason Street
Worcester, MA 01610
(508) 753-3588 & (508) 753-3089

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WORCESTER, MA
PERMIT NO. 271

Printed on 30% post-consumer waste, recycled paper.